



COVERED
CALIFORNIA

Certified Insurance Agent Role

Certified Insurance Agent Guide

Version 1.0

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1 INTRODUCTION TO CERTIFIED INSURANCE AGENT ROLE

Covered California Certified Insurance Agents play a key role in educating consumers about Covered California, and helping them enroll in Covered California health plans. Many consumers, including employers and employees, will need one-on-one help in understanding the marketplace, their options, and the enrollment process.

This course is designed specifically for Certified Insurance Agents, recognizing the knowledge already gained through licensing requirements, continuing education and years of industry experience. The focus of this course is to provide clarity about your role as a Certified Insurance Agent with Covered California.

1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this course, you will be able to describe:

- ✓ How Covered California will reach out to the public
- ✓ An overview of the Outreach and Education Grant Program and Certified Enrollment Counselor Program
- ✓ The Certified Insurance Agent role, requirements and expectations
- ✓ How commissions will be paid
- ✓ Where to find key contacts for on-going support

2 COVERED CALIFORNIA PUBLIC OUTREACH

Telling people about Covered California and what the program can do for them is the first step toward increasing the number of Californians that purchase health insurance and the number of California small businesses that offer health insurance to their employees. That is why Covered California's marketing plan includes a variety of outreach and education efforts that together will:

- Educate Californians on the benefits of having health insurance
- Maximize enrollment of Californians in Covered California
- Encourage insured Californians to retain their existing coverage
- Continue to ensure the availability of affordable health insurance for all eligible Californians

The public awareness campaign will encourage consumers to contact a Certified Insurance Agent, a Certified Enrollment Counselor, or Covered California for more information.

2.1 MARKETING METHODS

The marketing plan for Covered California uses a variety of channels to create awareness and promote the benefits of using this one-stop marketplace for affordable, quality health care options and insurance information.

The messaging and materials used in these channels will be distributed in up to 13 languages and targeted to effectively reach specific market segments. Channels include:

- Television
- Internet and social media (YouTube, Hulu, Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- Radio
- Community outreach
- Special events
- Direct mail
- Outdoor advertisements
- Mobile phone/ SMS
- Magazines
- Newspapers

2.2 TIMING OF THE PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

There are several phases of the Covered California public awareness campaign:

	Outreach and Marketing Phase	Start	End	Purpose
1.	Consumer Outreach and Education	07/01/13	On-going	To raise awareness about the new consumer-friendly health insurance marketplace.
2.	Get Ready, Get Set	07/15/13	09/30/13	To inform eligible Californians or small businesses that opportunities for coverage are coming in 2014.
3a.	Enroll!	10/01/13	03/31/14	Open enrollment—guide consumers or small businesses to their enrollment options and to shop and compare Covered California health plans; deliver the message that the time to enroll has come and it is easy to apply. Enrollment is ongoing for SHOP. Small employers can choose an open enrollment to coincide with their current contract renewal and is not limited to a specific time of year. The second part of this phase will emphasize that this is the last chance for consumers to enroll in 2014.
3b.	Time Is Running Out!	01/01/14	03/31/14	
4.	Reinforcement and Special Enrollment	04/01/14	09/30/14	<p>Promote enrollment of those who did not enroll during the open-enrollment period of the first year.</p> <p>Promote the Special Enrollment period for consumers who experience a change of circumstances (e.g., marriage, birth, adoption, loss in health care coverage).</p>
5.	Get Ready, Get Set	07/01/14	09/30/14	Inform eligible Californians or small businesses of the opportunities to enroll in coverage during the upcoming open-enrollment period.
6.	Enroll!	10/01/14	12/07/14	<p>Guide consumers or small businesses to their enrollment options and to shop and compare Covered California Health Plans.</p> <p>Deliver the message that the time to enroll has come and it is easy to apply.</p>

3 THE OUTREACH AND EDUCATION GRANT PROGRAM AND CERTIFIED ENROLLMENT COUNSELOR PROGRAM

Enrolling millions of Californians in health care coverage is no easy task. Then consider the challenge of reaching consumers who may be unfamiliar with insurance, reside in rural and hard-to-reach areas and collectively speak numerous languages. Achieving enrollment goals will require a combination of broad-based media exposure, community support, and one-on-one interactions.

Both the Outreach and Education Grant Program and Certified Enrollment Counselor Program provide outreach and education efforts designed to reach people where they work, shop and play, and in their own preferred language. The Certified Enrollment Counselor program is also designed to provide one-on-one, in-person assistance to guide the enrollment process.

3.1 OVERVIEW OF THE OUTREACH AND EDUCATION GRANT PROGRAM

The purpose of the Outreach and Education Grant Program is to have a wide variety of non-government and community-based organizations, referred to as Grant Entities, participate in promoting public awareness as well as helping to educate the public.

Federal grant funds were awarded to Covered California to support outreach and education efforts. These grant funds were awarded to qualified and selected organizations throughout California.

The role of the Grant Entity includes:

- Promoting public awareness
- Helping to remove barriers to enrollment that keep eligible consumers and small businesses from applying for coverage
- Educating the public about the value of purchasing health insurance, and health insurance costs and options

NOTE: Grant Entities cannot enroll consumers or small businesses in Covered California Health Insurance Plans. Leads generated by this outreach and education will be disseminated to Certified Insurance Agents and Certified Enrollment Counselors, as appropriate or according to consumer request.

3.2 OVERVIEW OF THE CERTIFIED ENROLLMENT COUNSELOR PROGRAM

The Certified Enrollment Counselor program is made up of trusted and known organizations that serve as critical resources for consumers. The Certified Enrollment Counselor program is designed to provide one-on-one, in-person assistance to educate consumers on health care options and guide the enrollment process. During the early years of Covered California, about 50 percent of targeted consumers (over 2.5 million) are expected to need personal assistance.

Certified Enrollment Counselors are individuals who:

- Are trained and certified, and affiliated with a Certified Enrollment Entity
- Provide in-person assistance to consumers and help them apply for Covered California programs, in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner.
- Have the knowledge about health insurance, affordability programs, and Covered California Health Plans to successfully enroll individuals in coverage.

NOTE: Because Certified Enrollment Counselors are not licensed, they cannot recommend specific health insurance companies, but can describe available options, and enroll consumers *once the consumer chooses a plan*.

4 THE CERTIFIED INSURANCE AGENT ROLE AND REQUIREMENTS

Certified Insurance Agents bring a depth of experience to Covered California by:

- Serving as trusted licensed advisors
- Maintaining deep customer relationships
- Providing valued service (not just enrollment but ongoing support)
- Offering solutions within and outside of Covered California Health Plans
- Being savvy marketers
- Acting as experts in both individual and group markets

4.1 THE ROLE

Many of the services required when working with Covered California are similar to the traditional Agent role. The main differences are related to support for the affordability programs including premium assistance, cost-sharing reductions, and Medi-Cal.

Certified Insurance Agents are expected to:

- Distribute fair and impartial information concerning enrollment in Covered California Health Plans and affordability programs, such as Medi-Cal
- Assist individuals in applying for premium assistance and cost-sharing reductions
- Facilitate enrollment for individuals and their families in coverage (Medi-Cal and Covered California Health Plans)
- Facilitate enrollment of small employers in Covered California Health Plans through the Small Business Health Options Program (SHOP)
- Support retention efforts, including coverage renewals, eligibility redetermination, verification of premium assistance and cost-sharing reductions, and Medi-Cal re-determination
- Provide information to consumers in a culturally and linguistically appropriate way
- Serve all eligible consumers regardless of program or product eligibility
- Refer consumers to the applicable state agencies for any enrollee with a grievance, complaint, or question about how a benefit decision was made

The main difference in the role between a Certified Insurance Agent and Certified Enrollment Counselor is detailed below. As a reminder, Grant Entities do not enroll consumers, they provide outreach and education services only.

Market Segment	Certified Insurance Agent	Certified Enrollment Counselor
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*SHOP Marketplace	X	
Individual Marketplace	X	X
Medi-Cal	X	X
Private Marketplace	X	
*SHOP = Small Business Health Options Program		

4.2 CERTIFIED INSURANCE AGENT REQUIREMENTS

To transact business with Covered California, Certified Insurance Agents must:

- Have an active California Accident and Health Agent license in good standing
- Provide proof of Errors and Omissions (E & O) insurance in the amount specified in the Certified Insurance Agent Agreement Complete Certified Insurance Agent training offered by Covered California
- Pass the Certification Exam by 80% or better
- Sign the Certified Insurance Agent Agreement

The following sections cover the requirements and certification in detail.

4.2.1 MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

Certified Insurance Agents must maintain an active California Accident and Health Agent license to transact business on behalf of Covered California. Certified Insurance Agents must notify Covered California immediately of any expiration, termination, suspension or other action by the California Department of Insurance or any other government agency affecting the license. In signing the Certified Insurance Agent Agreement, Certified Insurance Agents are also confirming:

- The Certified Insurance Agent shall represent the health insurance plans offered through Covered California in accordance with the Certified Insurance Agent Agreement, including fairly and accurately presenting all available plan options and costs, regardless of the Agent's appointments with any health plan or on the basis of payment schedules or other considerations made to the Certified Insurance Agent.
- The Certified Insurance Agent will provide ongoing service to individuals, employers, and employees as outlined in the Certified Insurance Agent Agreement, as long as they are the Agent of Record.
- The Certified Insurance Agent agrees to obtain and maintain Errors and Omissions insurance in an amount, and with a carrier, satisfactory to Covered California, and to provide proof to Covered California upon request.

4.2.2 CERTIFICATION

All Certified Insurance Agents must be certified by Covered California. The certification process includes the following:

- Completion of all required curriculum including program and system (California Healthcare Eligibility, Enrollment and Retention System - CalHEERS) training
- Achieving a passing score on the Certification Exam of 80% or better
- Submission of the Agent's E&O declaration page reflecting the minimum coverage amounts
- Signing of the Certified Insurance Agent Agreement

Once all of the above items are completed, Certified Insurance Agents will receive a Covered California Agent Kit that provides additional information and next steps to begin enrollment activities.

4.2.3 ASSEMBLY BILL 1761 AND CERTIFIED INSURANCE AGENTS

AB 1761, enacted in 2012, requires that no individual or entity represent, consult, or provide services on behalf of Covered California, unless that individual or entity has a valid agreement with Covered California to engage in those activities.

AB 1761 specifies that it is an unfair business practice for entities engaged in the solicitation of health care service plan contracts, and for persons engaged in the business of insurance, to violate this provision.

AB 1761 is intended to prohibit any individual or entity from falsely representing that they are acting on behalf of Covered California.

Execution of the Certified Insurance Agent Agreement, as well as completing the training and certification, supports compliance with this regulation.

5 COMPENSATION

5.1 APPOINTMENT AND COMMISSIONS

To receive compensation, Certified Insurance Agents must be properly appointed. The process differs between the individual market and the SHOP.

For the individual market:

- Commissions are paid by each health insurance company according to their active commission schedule at the time of enrollment
- Certified Insurance Agents must be directly appointed by each of the health insurance companies in Covered California to receive commission from the health insurance company
- The commission rate is the same rate as non-exchange business
- Commissions are based on the gross premium and not the net. This means that if an applicant is eligible for subsidies, it will not negatively impact commission rates
- Health insurance company premium rates are the same for business sold with or without a Certified Insurance Agent
- There are no "steering" bonuses (Agents are required to be fair and objective when recommending plans, and not base recommendations on bonuses or higher commissions)

- By law, Certified Insurance Agents cannot be compensated for Medi-Cal enrollment

For the Covered California SHOP market:

- SHOP commissions are paid by Covered California
- Certified Insurance Agents must be appointed by Covered California to receive commissions (agents do not need to secure appointment by each Covered California SHOP health insurance company. Agents will be appointed under SHOP's Master Agent Agreement which sub-appoints Certified Insurance Agents with all participating SHOP carriers)
- SHOP premium rates are the same for business sold with or without a Certified Insurance Agent
- SHOP agent commission rates are competitive with the rates paid outside of the exchange market (a specific commission schedule and details are provided in the Certified Insurance Agent Agreement)
- The Certified Insurance Agent Agreement includes full vesting language with familiar terms: Certified Insurance Agents can be assured that business sold during the year is secured under the agreed-upon commission rate
- Certified Insurance Agents may not in any way share, refund, split, kickback, divide or apportion any commissions with another party. This includes offering any bonus, service, prize, fee waiver, or other inducement to a present or prospective group.

NOTE: Certified Enrollment Counselors can refer business to Certified Insurance Agents, but Certified Insurance Agents cannot share commissions with the Certified Enrollment Counselor. The Affordable Care Act prohibits Certified Enrollment Counselors from receiving compensation from health insurance companies, directly or indirectly.

5.2 CERTIFIED INSURANCE AGENT-OF-RECORD

Employer groups may transfer from one Certified Insurance Agent to another at any time. Any group may change Certified Insurance Agents, and/or designate a new Certified Insurance Agent-of-Record, by notifying Covered California in writing.

Payment to the Certified Insurance Agent is contingent upon the following:

- The group policy remains active and in force with Covered California
- The Certified Insurance Agents reasonably services all groups in accordance with the terms of the Certified Insurance Agent Agreement
- The Certified Insurance Agent complies with all Covered California's rules, practices, eligibility guidelines and procedures
- The Certified Insurance Agent maintains their license in good standing, and meets all requirements outlined in the Certified Insurance Agent Agreement.

6 MARKETING AND ADVERTISING

6.1 FORMS OF ADVERTISING

It is important to maintain the brand integrity of Covered California. Certified Insurance Agents must use only the materials provided by Covered California, or materials and agent marketing tools that meet all requirements as outlined in the Certified Insurance Agent Agreement. Any references to the Covered California brands made by Certified Insurance Agents in their own materials may be subject to review and approval by Covered California. The materials include, but are not limited to:

- Advertising in all forms, whether print or electronic
- Websites and banner ads
- Sales collateral

Additionally, Certified Insurance Agents must not:

- Use any advertisement, website, or any other material in which the name, logo, product name or any service mark of Covered California is used outside of Covered California's guidelines, without Covered California's written consent
- Use any advertisement, website or other communication issued by the Certified Insurance Agent that could be mistaken for an advertisement, website or other communication issued by Covered California
- Use any Covered California marks in the URL (domain name) of any website or internet "redirect", owned, controlled, or used by the Certified Insurance Agent

Covered California has a variety of marketing materials available in multiple languages. The materials use simple language, designed to help Certified Insurance Agents inform clients about their health insurance options.

Materials can be downloaded and/or ordered through the Covered California website. Additional information on collateral will be included in the Certified Insurance Agent Kit.

6.2 COVERED CALIFORNIA REVIEW OF MARKETING MATERIALS

If a Certified Insurance Agent prepares marketing or advertising materials to market Covered California Health Plans, written approval from Covered California may be required prior to distribution or usage.

7 SUPPORT FOR CERTIFIED INSURANCE AGENTS

7.1 CONTACTS

This quick-reference list provides contact information for many common situations.

Certified Insurance Agent Questions	Who to Contact
Questions on eligibility, Premium Assistance, cost-sharing subsidies, application status, Medi-Cal and general Covered California	Covered California Service Center 1.888.975.1142

Certified Insurance Agent Questions	Who to Contact
questions for the individual marketplace	
SHOP or small group related inquiries, sales support and products	SHOP Customer Service 1.877.453.9198
Trouble connecting to or using CalHEERS, the Covered California online portal	Covered California Service Center 1.888.975.1142
Commissions, appointments, Certified Insurance Agent-of-Record questions	SHOP Customer Service 1.877.453.9198
Agent Training and Certification	SHOP Customer Service 1.877.453.9198
Covered California Media Line	916.205.8403

ACTIVITIES

Activity A

Check your knowledge of Covered California's public outreach. For each statement, answer true or false.

	True	False
1. Three ways Covered California will be advertised is through television, Facebook, and radio ads.		
2. Educating Californians on the benefits of having health insurance is one of the key goals of the public outreach.		
3. Enrollment begins on October 31 st , 2013.		

Activity B

Check your knowledge of the Certified Insurance Agent role.

	Answer
1. To be a Covered California Certified Insurance Agent conducting business with Covered California, an Agent must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Maintain an active California Accident and Health Agent license. b. Complete the required Covered California training courses and pass the certification exam. c. Sign a Certified Insurance Agent Agreement. d. All of the above. 	
2. All of the following statements about the Certified Insurance Agent compensation are true EXCEPT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Certified Insurance Agents may not share commissions with Certified Enrollment Counselors. b. Certified Insurance Agents will be compensated for Medi-Cal enrollments. c. In order to receive commission for enrollments in a Covered California individual plan, Certified Insurance Agents must be appointed with each of the health insurance companies. d. In order to receive commissions for enrollments in a Covered California SHOP plan, Certified Insurance Agents must be appointed with Covered California. 	
3. In marketing Covered California, Certified Insurance Agents may: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Contact Covered California to obtain collateral in multiple languages b. Use the Covered California logo as long as materials are submitted for review before or after usage c. Use only materials approved by Covered California. d. a & b e. a & c 	

8 ACTIVITY ANSWERS

Activity A

1. True
2. True
3. False—October 1st, 2013

Activity B

1. D
2. B
3. E